ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

275 OAK ST. SUITE 150 BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14203 PHONE: 716-856-6525 x121 FAX: 856-6754

E-MAIL: tkniazuk@ecidany.com
www.erie.gov/enrp

Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

Members:

James Allen Hon. Vince Anello Colleen DiPirro Tim Doolittle Hon. Wright Ellis Matthew Enstice Andrew Eszak Samuel Ferraro Hon. Joel Giambra Robert Gower Hon. Timothy Kennedy Hon. Kathy Konst David Lacki Celeste Lawson Gregory Lewis Hon. Cynthia Locklear Hon. Peter McMahon Hon. John Mills Hal Morse Jo Nasoff-Finton Hon. Sean O'Connor John Percy Dr. Gary Praetzel Melinda Rath Sanderson David Roll Hon. William Ross Laura St. Pierre Smith Christopher Schoepflin Hector Titus Timothy Wanamaker Peter Wendel

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale Lawrence Witul

Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting December 8, 2006

Present: Burmaster, Weinstein, Allen, Ellis, Ferraro, Gower, Konst, Lacki, Lewis, McMahon, Mills, Morse, Nasoff-Finton, Percy, Rath Sanderson, Ross, St. Pierre Smith, Titus, Wendel

Excused: Anello, Doolittle, Enstice, Eszak, Lawson, Casale

Absent: DiPirro, Giambra, Kennedy, Locklear, O'Connor, Praetzel, Roll, Schoepflin, Wanamaker, Witul

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Barry Weinstein, MD. ENRP Member Jo Nasoff-Finton and the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) were thanked for hosting the meeting.

Minutes of the June, 2006 meeting were approved.

New members Amherst Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Colleen DiPirro, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Planning Manager Robert Gower, Erie County Legislature 9th District Representative Cynthia Locklear, and Erie County Legislature 13th District Representative John Mills were welcomed. Departing members Diane Ruszala and Legislator Demone Smith were thanked for their service to the group.

ENRP Administrator Tod A. Kniazuk presented the sustainability update. The beginning balance for the period was \$6,038.08 and the ending balance was \$-4,068.40. During the period since the June general meeting membership contributions were received from the Erie County Association of Local Governments (McMahon), and the National Electrical Contractors Organization (Roll).

Kniazuk detailed proposed changes to the structure of ENRP. These changes were recommended by the co-chairs in order to better focus the meetings and move business forward more efficiently. They include:

- Change staff title from administrator to executive director to better fit with grant requests, some of which require a signature from an executive staff member.
- Distribute full packets electronically to all members prior to general meetings (and mail hard copies as requested).
- Theme general meetings around one of our main topic areas with the appropriate subcommittee assisting in the planning of the meeting.
- Discussion of subcommittee reports at general meetings will be focused on approval items only (all members will be asked to review the reports prior to the meeting and contact the subcommittee chair directly with any questions).

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership approved the aforementioned items. Co-Chair Burmaster noted that the changes wouldn't limit important discussions at the general meetings, but rather would serve to eliminate duplicative conversation that already occurred in the subcommittees.

Also on sustainability, Co-Chair Weinstein noted that Kniazuk had not been paid in several months. It was explained that an expected \$5,000 from the Niagara County Legislature would be used to meet those obligations. Membership renewal letters for 2007 would be forthcoming.

Kniazuk presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed.

Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. Feedback was sought on follow up ideas to the local governments economic development forums. Suggested at the subcommittee level were promoting NYS SiteFinder to municipalities, asking the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE) to compile a profile of the requests we are not able to meet, and having the BNE include municipalities in their e-mail blasts. ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro noted that the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) already reaches out to municipalities for SiteFinder. ENRP Member Laura St. Pierre Smith added that the BNE and Buffalo Niagara Partnership (BNP) are looking to reconvene the group that participated in the shovel ready study to conduct another such effort. Co-Chair Weinstein suggested that McMahon, Ferraro, and the BNE meet and return to the group with specific action items.

Subcommittee Chair David Lacki presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. On the issue of cross border identification, Lacki added that AAA is working on being able to issue a one-day passport.

Subcommittee Chair Peter Wendel presented the Transportation Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed.

The group then focused on the meeting's main topic, the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS). McMahon referred the group to the Government Affairs Subcommittee report for background on the issue. He summed up the subcommittee's discussion as being of two schools of thought; release what's done, or wait until the entire document is complete. What's currently completed are the contextual piece, as well as the life science cluster.

Ferraro asked who would release the report; ENRP Member James Allen replied that ENRP now "owns" the document as it was released to us by the ECIDA (the contracted party with the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth). Ferraro then suggested that if there's enough substance to what's already complete it could be released in draft form. He added that the Framework for Regional Growth is complete and being presented to the two county legislatures, and that it would be great to get the REDS out there as well so people can see how the two fit together.

Nasoff referenced the subcommittee report as well, highlighting the fact that a plan was developed as to how to complete the clusters; this demonstrates movement forward. Ferraro committed assistance from the NCCED as well. St. Pierre informed the group that Bob Martin of STORE also agreed to take a piece of the work. She added that it would be more confusing to the public and to potential funders to release the document a piece at a time.

As to those pieces, Allen said that the context sets the stage for what we're doing and how we're doing it. Wendel built on this thought, calling the context strategy and the clusters tactics. Allen added that former UB President William Greiner was also interested in the effort and may be willing to help. ENRP Member Wright Ellis called the context "an excellent piece." He asserted that the Framework lost all its momentum over time, and that we're in danger of losing momentum on the REDS as well. He asserted that the REDS context piece should be released now, starting with

municipal officials, and we should commit to following that up with completing and releasing the clusters. McMahon agreed that we should release the context as soon as we can, then commit to completing a cluster per month for the next five or six months. ENRP Member Kathy Konst suggested getting industry people, municipalities, and other interested parties together to help us with the rollout and implementation plan. Co-Chair Burmaster added that we should take advantage of the good work already done, not wait for a perfect document.

Kniazuk noted that whatever decision we reach, it will not result in immediate action from a staff perspective. This is because we still need to flesh out the details of whatever decision is reached. Once that is done, however, we can move forward quickly.

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership approved the release of the context work of the Regional Economic Development Strategy, with a commitment to follow that up with the completion of the clusters. This work will be pursued in the Government Affairs Subcommittee.

Ferraro presented an update on the Framework for Regional Growth, www.regionalframework.com The final document is complete and is being taken to the two county legislatures after the holidays.

There was no old or new business.

The next general meeting date was set for Friday, February 2 at 8:30 a.m. at Niagara University. The focus will be on tourism and culture. The Co-Chairs thanked the group for their commitment this year, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk January 24, 2007